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ABSTRACT

This document reviews the literature about the variety of instructional methods to teach social studies concepts. Divided into five parts, part 1 investigates current curriculum goals in social studies. Part 2 examines the literature on the use of textbooks and stategies in social studies instruction. Part 3 explores the use of textbooks supplemented with literature. Part 4 addresses literature-based social studies instruction. Part 5 probes the studies on achievement and attitude of students on the use of literature and textbooks in social studies. The summary suggests that the primary objective of the social studies curriculum is to prepare students for active citizenship, but that a variety of strategies are used to reach that goal. Contains 31 references. (EH)

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Review of the Literature on the Utilization of Textbooks and Tradebooks in Social Studies Instruction

ED 390 775

INTRODUCTION

Social studies concepts are taught through a variety of instructional methods including the use of textbooks, textbooks supplemented with literature, and a literature-based approach. A review of the literature investigated the effects of instructional methods on the achievement and attitudes of students in the area of social studies.

To facilitate the information this section was subdivided. Part I investigated current curriculum goals in social studies. Part II examined the literature on the use of textbooks and strategies in social studies instruction. Textbooks supplemented with literature was explored in Part III. Literature-based social studies instruction was addressed in Part IV. Part V probed the studies on achievement and attitude of students on the use of literature and textbooks in social studies. The review of the literature was concluded with a summary.

PART I: CURRENT CURRICULUM GOALS

The central goal of the social studies curriculum is to prepare "thoughtful Americans who have capacities for living effective personal and public lives" (Curriculum Task Force of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, 1989, p. 4).

The interrelated course of study included geography, history, sociology, economics, political science, and anthropology. Curriculum guidelines and goals were established in 1989 by the Curriculum Task Force of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, hereinafter referred to as

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CTFNCSSS, (CTFNCSSS, 1989).

The CTFNCSSS (1989), recommended that the schools provide social studies curricula which prepare students for active citizenship in the local community, the nation, and the world. The spiral curriculum should encompass grades K-12, and provide in-depth knowledge in all the areas of discipline. Through reading, writing, speaking, and analyzing statistical data, students develop critical thinking skills, work independently and co-operatively, and develop conflict resolution and problem solving strategies. A wide variety of materials should be utilized to carry out instruction including textbooks, literature, maps, audiovisual aids, and primary documents (CTFNCSSS, 1989).

According to Risinger (1992), our society is changing quickly in "economics, politics, social structure, and education" (p. 1). Today there are larger numbers of immigrants entering the United States from more countries than during the late 1880's to the early 1900's. These immigrants are coming from, "Cambodia, Haiti, Nigeria, Mexico, Egypt, Pakistan, China, Ireland, and Honduras" (Risinger, 1992, p. 8), and are bringing with them their cultures. It is the role of the teacher to provide an awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity, while preparing the students for citizenship in the United States (Risinger, 1992).

Risinger (1992) suggested several new trends for the social studies curriculum. History should include not only dates and events but an in-depth study of how average people live. More geography is needed to develop a better understanding of the relationship of the earth and history. Literature should be used to bring to life historical events through characters. Also to be included in the curriculum are multicultural units, in-depth coverage of topics, and writing to improve achievement (Risinger, 1992).

The goals of the CTFNSSS (1989) and Risinger (1992) were central to the development of social studies curriculum which strived to prepare the students for citizenship.

PART II: TEXTBOOKS AND STRATEGIES

Social studies teachers prepared students for active citizenship by using textbooks. There were several reasons why social studies textbooks were used in classrooms. Many school districts mandated their use (Beck and McKeown, 1991). Research indicated that other factors influenced the degree to which textbooks were utilized. According to Karlin (1992), the factors that influenced the use of textbooks included "the attitude of teachers toward reading, instructional planning time, tasks for students, years of experience, and quality of textbooks" (p. 2807A). Teachers used the textbooks more frequently if they were more experienced, lived in a rural setting, or held a graduate degree (Barker, 1992).

Social studies have been criticized by many teachers because of the readability levels. DuVall as stated in Stetson and Williams (1992), indicated that texts varied "four or more years in reading difficulty from one passage to another" (p. 24). Other factors related to the difficulty of reading expository text included unfamiliar and unpredictable text structure, assumed level of reader background knowledge, lack of in-depth coverage of topics, and text coherence (Beck and McKeown, 1991).

Stetson and Williams (1992) compared the reading of a textbook to the use of energy. A reader exhibited the energy to read. Texts required two types of energy. "Surface structure" (p. 22), which enabled a reader to decode and "deep structure" (p. 22), which was needed for comprehension. Energy from the

reader must be dispersed in equal amounts in order to meet the requirements of the surface and deep structure. If more energy was used to meet the needs of the surface structure, then the deep structure was sacrificed (Stetson and Williams, 1992).

Strategies have been developed to increase reading comprehension of textbooks. Teachers made background knowledge available to students through class discussions (Brody, 1991). Textbooks were made coherent by revising original texts. Beck and McKeown, (1991) coupled background information with text formation with text revisions to increase reading comprehension. The use of revised text and think alouds yielded increased reading comprehension (Loxterman, 1993). Stetson and Williams (1992) indicated that pre-viewing materials, pre-teaching vocabulary, re-reading passages, using easier materials, and reading the text aloud to students also increased comprehension.

Hennings (1993) pointed out that reading history texts required specific skills including: establishing a "meaningful space frame" (p. 363), establishing cause and effect patterns, comparing similar events, and checking correctness and authenticity of information. These strategies when applied aided students in reading and comprehending history textbooks.

Social studies textbooks were successfully used in classrooms. Research revealed that reading comprehension strategies incorporated in the classroom enhanced social studies comprehension.

PART III: TEXTBOOKS SUPPLEMENTED WITH LITERATURE

To achieve the goal of preparing students for citizenship, many teachers chose to supplement the social studies textbook with literature. The reasons cited for this decision were; reading levels of the text, single perspectives

on information, and broad content covered (De Priest, 1991, Beck and McKeown, 1991, and Risinger 1992).

Social studies texts were not suitable for the variety of reading levels found in a classroom. One grade level may have as many as five reading levels. Textbooks were written to fit specific grade-level readability requirements. This often caused the text to consist of short sentences with limited vocabulary, that often omitted connecting words and referents. These conditions increased the difficulty of reading textbooks (De Priest, 1991).

Single perspectives of events were presented in textbooks, limiting students' awareness of historical events (Beck and McKeown, 1991).

Textbooks were designed to cover a variety of subjects on a superficial level. Teachers were rushed through the curriculum exposing students to limited amounts of information on important topics. The result was that students acquired "limited growth" (Beck and McKeown, 1991, p. 486).

Literature was used to supplement textbooks in both elementary and secondary classrooms. Tradebooks provided a variety of reading levels, multiple perspectives on information, and in-depth coverage of a subject. Types of literature were not limited to fiction but included "biographies, poetry, mythology and legends, plays, and religious literature" (Risinger, 1992, p. 6).

Tradebooks provided a variety of reading levels to accommodate the needs of the students. Books written on a variety of topics made history come alive for students. Pupils made connections with characters in stories to facilitate understanding of historical events (De Priest, 1991, Beck and McKeown, 1991, and Lamme, 1994).

Literature offered a variety of perspectives on events in history.

Students developed critical thinking skills and deepened appreciation for the ways events and ideas affected lives (Risinger, 1992). Research indicated that classrooms which employed literacy tasks, including reading, writing, speaking and listening during social studies, exposed students to multiple perspectives of the teacher, other students, and the text (King, 1992).

An in-depth study of a subject was provided when tradebooks were utilized (Beck and McKeown, 1991). The University of Wisconsin, as cited in Risinger (1992), indicated that an in-depth approach yielded more knowledge, satisfactory performance on standardized tests, and an enjoyment of social studies. A New York University study by Wooten (1992), found that fourth graders who read historical fiction and textbooks increased achievement in recall, comprehension, and critical analysis.

Textbooks supplemented with literature provided a variety of reading levels, multiple perspectives on historical events, and an in-depth study of a topic. Research revealed that supplementing textbooks with literature enhanced social studies achievement.

PART IV: LITERATURE-BASED APPROACH

The CTFNCSSS (1989) stated that a variety of materials should be used to teach social studies. Literature-based social studies programs were developed based on reading levels, criteria for selection of books, and strategies to aid comprehension.

Teachers' utilization of literature in the social studies curriculum varied from an occasional story, to a unit where the primary source for knowledge was tradebooks. A literature-based social studies program was one that employed a variety of strategies with literature to develop a specific

historical concept or event (Lamme, 1994).

Literature-based social studies programs first determined the reading levels of the students. Tradebooks were selected because of the variety of reading levels to accommodate the needs of the individual classroom (Kornfeld, 1994).

Tradebooks were selected on criteria based on developmental theories. Huck, Hepler, and Hickman (cited in Harms and Lettow, 1994), stated that picture books should be "developmentally appropriate" (p. 152) for the student, with illustrations that would interest children. Historical fiction was authentic with accurate, thorough research completed by the author. Central characters were developed to enable students to identify the conflicts of the historical event (Harms and Lettow, 1994). Literature was free from biases of women, minorities, and nations (Harms and Lettow, 1994, Kornfeld, 1994).

Resources were cited that were available to aid teachers in locating tradebooks. An annual list of "Notable Children's Trade Books in Social Studies" (Lamme, 1994, p. 159) published in Social Education by the National Council for Social Studies provided a variety of titles. The journal, Literature-Based Social Studies, listed and reviewed tradebooks (Lamme, 1994). Book Links, a journal published by the American Library Association, provided literature to link with "author, illustrator, topic, and theme" (Lamme, 1994, p. 169).

The literature review indicated several articles incorporated into literature-based social studies units. Themes utilized included, the United States Constitution, Pioneering (Van Middendorp, 1991), the Holocaust (Shawn, 1992), and World War II (Kornfeld, 1994).

Strategies were employed to develop cultural and social appreciation. Book links enabled children to establish links between books and their own lives. Webbing was a strategy used after a book was read to create connections between themes and literature. Short and Pierce (cited in Lamme, 1994) found that children comprehend better if they responded to literature. A variety of responses incorporated included diaries, letters, stories, and interviews (Kornfeld, 1994).

A review of the literature indicated that literature-based units were developed to teach social studies concepts. These units were based upon established reading levels, criteria for book selection, and strategies that aid comprehension.

PART V: ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTITUDE STUDIES

Research has been provided on the utilization of a variety of methods to teach social studies, including textbooks, textbooks supplemented with literature, and literature-based programs, and the resulting impact on the acquisition of knowledge. This section detailed studies conducted on the use of textbooks, textbooks supplemented with literature, and literature-based units on achievement and attitudes of students.

Corbin (1990) conducted a study on the use of textbooks versus literature in social studies with fifth-grade students. The text was read by one group and three novels on the same topic were read by a second group. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered for achievement and interest. No significant statistical differences were reported in achievement between groups. On the interest index the texbook group showed no significant change, however the literature group indicated a statistically significant change.

This study indicated that the use of literature positively affected the attitude of the students (Corbin, 1990).

Fifth-grade students were the subjects of a study by Rudney (1991), on the effects of literature on the achievement and attitudes in social studies. Each group received the same lessons each day with the textbook. The experimental group listened to a story daily for fifteen minutes, while the control group completed textbook-related activities. Results yielded no significant differences in achievement on the objective tests between the two groups. Significant improvement in attitudes toward social studies were indicated in each group. This study confirmed that literature can be included in the social studies curriculum without affecting achievement (Rudney, 1991).

Guzzetti, Kowlinski, and McGowan (1992) conducted a study on the use of textbooks versus textbooks supplemented with tradebooks with two sixth-grade social studies classes. The study assessed achievement and measure attitudes toward reading and social studies. One class used the textbooks and its recommended activities. The second class used tradebooks in conjunction with several strategies including: assessing prior knowledge; think sheets; head, hand, heart citizenship; and developing personal responses. Pre-test and post-tests were administered. Achievement was measured by teacher-made tests which yielded a "significant difference in concept acquisition" (Guzzetti, Kowalinski, and McGowan, 1992, p. 120), favoring the experimental group. To measure reading attitudes the Estes Reading Attitude Assessment was administered. This test assessed attitudes of students for content and basic school subjects using a three point scale. Miller (1985) noted "the reported reliabilities of internal consistency type are respectable for a

measurement of this kind and ranged from .76 to .88 for [the] elementary test" (p. 561). This test cannot be used to compare students with national trends since it was normed on a limited population of "1,815 and a geographic area of five states: (Miller, 1985, p. 562). Results of the reading attitude survey showed no differential gains in attitudes toward reading. The students ranked the sixth grade subjects in order of importance and enjoyment. No changes in the preference of the subjects were indicated. This study showed some support for a literature-based social studies curriculum (Guzzetti, Kowalski, and McGowan, 1992).

Researchers from Oklahoma State University (cited in McKinney & Jones, 1993), studied the effects of the use of literature, textbooks and literature, and textbooks with a group of fifth-grade students. The students were divided into three groups. The Treatment One group read a tradebook. The textbook was used with Treatment Two Group, plus each student received a tradebook to read at home. The Treatment Three group read only the textbook. Students were administered an achievement test and an attitude survey prior to the study and upon completion of the study. Results indicated that students learned more social studies when taught with a children's book, rather than a textbook. Contents was taught in both the text and the tradebook was not learned by students who read only the textbook. A positive shift was made in all groups from pre-tests to post-tests on attitudes toward texts (McKinney & Jones, 1993).

A similar study was completed on third-grade students by Swift (1993). Students were placed in two groups. One group used the social studies test, while the second group read tradebooks. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered for achievement and attitude. The results indicated no difference

in achievement between groups. The attitude assessment did yield a more positive attitude toward social studies by students who read the children's book. Students did not change their ranking of the subject of social studies. This study supported the use of literature as a positive effect on the attitudes of students toward social studies, but had no effect on achievement (Swift, 1993).

The information from the review of the studies on achievement and attitudes in social studies revealed that achievement of students who read literature was comparable to the achievement of students who read textbooks. The research did support a shift in attitudes of those who read tradebooks toward social studies in several studies.

SUMMARY

Teachers utilized a variety of instructional methods and materials to teach the established goals of the social studies curriculum. Prevailing trends in social studies were discussed. Specific methods and materials investigated were textbooks, textbooks supplemented with literature, and literature-based social studies instruction. The effects of these methods and materials on the achievement and attitudes of the students in social studies were also examined.

The primary objective of the social studies curriculum was to prepare students for active citizenship. According to the CTFNCSSS (1989) and Risinger (1991), teachers provided in-depth instruction in the areas of history, geography, economics, sociology, political science and anthropology. These disciplines were taught through the use of a variety of materials including textbooks, literature, primary documents, and maps. The incorporation of these goals in the social studies curriculum ensured

preparation of students for active citizenship.

Teachers chose to use textbooks for a variety of reasons including, school district mandates (Beck and McKeown, 1991), professional experiences, educational levels (Barker, 1992), and attitudes (Karlin, 1992). Expository text created difficulty due to unfamiliar and unpredictable text, text coherence (Beck and McKeown, 1991), and readability levels (Stetson and Williams, 1992). Strategies were employed to increase reading comprehension, including revised texts (Beck and McKeown, 1991), pre-teaching vocabulary and re-reading passages (Stetson and Williams, 1992). Social studies concepts were successfully taught employing textbooks.

Textbooks supplemented with literature were used by teachers to provide social studies instruction. Social studies textbooks were difficult to read and comprehend due to the readability levels (De Priest, 1991), single perspectives of events, and superficial coverage of topics (Beck and McKeown, 1991). Literature was used to supplement the textbooks, to provide a variety of reading levels, multiple perspectives of events, and in-depth coverage of themes. Research revealed that supplementing textbooks with literature enhanced social studies achievement (Beck and McKeown, 1991).

Literature-based units were developed on a variety of social studies concepts. Teachers selected appropriate books for the themes to correspond with the students' reading levels. Books were also chosen based upon students' developmental levels, illustrations, authenticity (Harms and Lettow, 1994) and freedom from biases (Kornfeld, 1994). Webbing, book links, and responding to literature were strategies used to aid in reading comprehension (Lamme, 1944). Resources were cited that provided comprehensive bibliographies of children's literature essential to the development of a

literature-based social studies classroom.

Several studies were reviewed that assessed achievement and attitudes of students who were instructed in social studies using textbooks, textbooks supplemented with literature, and literature based units. Results on achievement levels indicated that all three methods were comparable. Shifts were reported in attitudes toward social studies favoring tradebooks in several studies.

This review of the literature revealed that the goals and objectives of the social studies curriculum were taught utilizing textbooks, textbooks supplemented with literature, and literature-based units.

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